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FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Name: Arnold Capano

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Tape: 47

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Tape FLHP0103

10:01:04

Q:

Well the first question is always the hardest question. We just need to have you name and how to spell it.

A:

OK. Arnold A-R-N-O-L-D F. Capano C-A-P-A-N-O.

10:01:16

Q:

Now tell us your real Italian name. I like that.

A:

Aurelio Pasquale Francisco Guiseppe Capano.

Q:

I love that.

(Both laughter)

A:

I've had the Arnold _____.

10:01:32

Q:

Um, first of all if you could give us a little bit of background as far as um, where you were born, where you went to school, a little bit about your family.

A:

Well I was born in Avondale and one of eight children. My mother and father both emigrated from the, from Italy. My father came from a small town on the outskirts of Foja on the Adriatic. And my mother came from a small town outside of Naples.

10:02:05

A:

Uh, they, their marriage was like a lot of the old timers marriage was. My dad saw a picture of my mother and he fell in love with the picture. So he was boarding with my aunt who was my mother's sister and he said you know if she'll marry me I'll pay her way over. So she came over and she had to be chaperoned with the, her brother.

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10:02:33

A:

And they got married and had, let's see there's three boys and five girls. And I had an infant sister that passed away prior to my birth. Then the next child that my mother had was a girl and she named it, they gave it the same name as the one that passed away. Uh, I grew up primarily in Mt. Auburn on Burnet Avenue and lived there. Went to Taft Elementary School and then Holy Name.

10:03:19

A:

I spent the first year between St. Francis Seraph downtown and St. Mary's in Hyde Park. Then in the 2nd grade I went to Holy Name and then to Taft and then the eighth grade. I graduated from Roger Bacon in High School and then went into the service. I went into the ASTRP program which I thought might lead to commission which I wanted but it didn't so happen.

10:03:54

A:

After the ASTRP program was really a, not fully connected with Army. We wore uniforms but we didn't have all the privileges of a private, we were below a private. Can you believe that? But anyway I spent 6 months at Purdue University taking college courses. Then after that I went was shipped to the infantry where I took basic training in Camp Gordon Georgia. And spent I guess about, I guess about 18 weeks there.

10:04:37

A:

Then went, then went, came home on leave and had to report to Camp Maxwell Texas, Camp Maxie, Texas. Spent a couple of weeks there then went to Camp Adair, Oregon where we shipped out. Fortunately the atomic bomb was dropped as we were enroute to, originally schedule to go to Saipan however they changed our orders a couple of days out and sent us to Honolulu where I went through the 13th phase with that boat in Honolulu.

10:05:18

A:

And then was assigned to Camp, no Camp, no Fort Durrusey and I spent 13 months there and was discharged. And after discharge I came back and enrolled in commercial college at Campbell Commercial School and took accounting. I had taken accounting in high school and I thought well that might be the field for me. After, after 6 months at Campbell Commercial School I thought you know, this is really not what I want.

10:05:58

A:

I wanted to go to, get into college and get either a certificate then eventually a degree. But they got me a job, Commercial School at that time did get you jobs you know and I worked for Refer Mills Restaurant Company as a food cost accountant. Well food cost bookkeeper and assistant accountant and uh I stayed with them until I met my wife.

10:06:30

A:

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Then I figured well I better try something different. I enrolled at night school at Xavier University and I saw on the bulletin board at Xavier that they had openings for accountants out at Fernald for National Lead. So I thought well I'll give it a try you know and I went out there and I applied and I got the job. And I started out in Accounts Payable as an accounting clerk and uh went from Accounts Payable to the Budget Department.

10:07:02

A:

And from the Budget Department I was transferred into Internal Auditing. Internal Auditing, I was transferred into Cost Accounting and then Cost Accounting. Uh, they had layoffs and my department was consolidated and I had, I was in charge of the Cost Accounting, nuclear materials accounting, internal auditing and oh what else. Cost reduction activities. After that then I got a promotion as Assistant Controller and worked under a fabulous guy by the name of Charlie Handle.

10:07:47

A:

And Charlie and I got along fabulously. And in fact uh, I consider him one of the nicest people I have ever met. We still once a month get together for lunch and maybe occasionally get together for Skyline. Although he cheats once in a while but he likes Skyline so I help him cheat. Uh, after I left the, I retired from Westinghouse February 1st of '88 and Charlie Handle was the accountant that was handling the financial end of the post-operations office for NLO.

10:08:37

A:

And this was the office that dealt primarily with the lawsuits, which Bob Winer was a manager of. And Charlie said he wanted out so he was a consultant so I became a consultant. And uh, I worked 3 years as a consultant and then Bob was always trying to get me to, to be a full time employee but DOE would not permit it. So finally DOE came to Bob and said why don't you make him a full time employee.

10:09:20

A:

Which they did. I was 65 at the time so I became a full time employee at 65. And I worked 3 years there and working for Bob and things were, he says, we kept busy. Then when DOE said we should close that office down, uh we did and then NL wanted somebody to kind of look at things you know the wind down of the legal activity.

10:10:01

A:

So I, I accepted the part, part, part time position with them. Like I said, told you earlier you know 3-5 hours a month maybe some months might even extend to 10. But it very seldom runs over that. In the early days uh, it did extend because there was still a lot going on but now things are really winding down. And that's where I'm at right now.

10:10:33

Q:

Great, and you started some time in 1952 right?

A:

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January the 2nd, 1952 and I remember I didn't get paid for New Year's Day so I accepted that. Then later on DOE auditors, well at that time it was called AEC, the AEC auditors said those people should be paid so, for New Year's Day so in essence I guess I really started January 1st, 1952.

10:11:11

Q:

So that site. What was the site like when you first started?

A:

It was a mess. They were in construction and they had barracks type, wooden barracks type administration building and it was muddy where you had to park and a lot of times vehicles were getting stuck and they had to have the old bulldozer pull them out. The traffic to get into the site, there was on 126, there was you know a long line of traffic and you had a rough time just getting into the plant.

10:11:48

A:

I mean, you might be in traffic line for oh you know 20 minutes or so but we always got there late. Uh, like I told Bobbi I said the first thing I did was go out and try to, went out and bought myself a pair of boots because it was just, it was just unbelievable muddy. And then when they, that was let's see I started in January, then in April I believe it was the administration the concrete, concrete block administration building was finished and we moved in there.

10:12:33

A:

Well they were trying to get a, trying to get a crop of grass to grow on the outside quadrant right between the administration building and the service building. We didn't have any air conditioning at that time and they laid down some fertilizer that was really foul smelling stuff. We had to have the windows open, it wasn't too, it wasn't too nice but then eventually the, you know, the odor went away and the air conditioning came on and everybody was happy.

10:13:11

Q:

My gosh, um, let's see we sort of went over your responsibilities during your tenure at Fernald, what exactly was, tell us a little bit about responsibilities of being an accounting clerk. What, that was your first job.

10:13:32

A:

Yeah, my first job there as accounting clerk was to process invoices for payment and uh there was, let's see, two, yeah we always had two or three clerks that processed the invoices for payment. That

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was the main function. When I was there occasionally the office manager would take me to help work on the budget so I got some experience working on a budget for him. That was Cliff Schwan.

10:14:18

Q:

And how much did you know about the process when you started there?

A:

Not much, not much. You could, a lot, a lot of the information you got through uh experience, my job in auditing we did an audit of the plant, record keeping. And we picked up, or at least I did, I'm sure the other auditors did also. Uh, we picked up a lot from doing that audit of the production process because like I said in the other room, there are stages of completion for each of the steps and well there's records that are generated in each phase of the operation.

10:15:17

A:

So you pick, I picked up a lot there. But I think I really picked up the knowledge when I was in the, well I think the Budget Department gave me some, some background into the process because the plants would submit, submit their budgets and they submitted them for each area but they didn't go into great detail. They would tell us approximately how many men they needed for say in Plant 5 the reduction area which is the derby producing.

10:15:55

A:

And then how much was in the casting area which was the ingot producing and they would break it down that way. So I picked up a little there. But I think I got the bulk of it, the most of my knowledge of the process when I was in Cost Accounting. Because there you go through each step and you got to cost each step and so you know eventually you become aware of it.

10:16:21

A:

And you know there was a, although I had you know in our Cost Accounting Department we had let's see five, six, must have been seven, seven accountants. Yeah, I'd say seven accountants and they, each one was assigned a certain portion of the overall plant. I remember I had like Plant 4 and Pilot Plant and the laboratories and the recovery plant you know and then you kind of, they'd switch them around every so often and you get knowledge on all of them. So that's how I, I think I became acquainted with it.

10:17:21

Q:

And you had to get a Q clearance (comment – yes) to work at Fernald, can you tell us about that process?

10:17:26

A:

Well that process they had, I think it was at that particular time when we got it, the FBI was doing the investigation. And you filled out a you know questionnaire, you had to give the names, the birth dates and the addresses of all your family members. And you know they took a complete family history. Uh, they would then come around and question some of the neighbors that lived near you or some acquaintance that you might have provided them with that information.

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10:18:09

A:

And they would, they would check and then after a while they would give you your clearance. Which you got, I think it was a, let's see before the Q you might have got a, I forget if it was a P or, but there was a step where you got a, I guess it was a P. Like a preliminary clearance. But you could only go so far with that. You couldn't look at any confidential or secret documents you know.

10:18:44

A:

When you got the Q, then you could. Now in Cost Accounting all of our reports were secret for the most part. Most of them were all secret because you gave the stages of completion, the inventories or what have you and that was all classified data.

10:19:06

Q:

From what I understand that was the, the process itself wasn't so much the secret as how much uranium was being produced.

A:

Yeah that was pretty much I think, I think you're right there.

10:19:21

Q:

Now that things are declassified, on average can you tell us how much uranium would come out of that plant on a given year.

A:

Oh my God.

Q:

I mean any, just average.

10:19:36

A:

Gee, a lot. I can't think of any specific figures but there was an awful lot that was shipped. I mean we were shipping to Hanford and Savannah River. Then some of the other stuff was going to Oak Ridge you know I mean it was just tons. There was a lot, a lot being shipped out. There was a lot produced there.

10:20:04

Q:

And how did um Fernald track that material?

A:

They tracked it by, through inventory and then they knew when they shipped something off they knew how much was in that, in that container. Then they would prepare what they called an SS Shipping Order. Which indicated the weight and the content of the material, the uranium content of the material. Like some, like derbies were 100 percent uranium.

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10:20:36

A:

But if they shipped anything like green salt, it might be, I don't remember the exact uranium component in green salt but you know maybe it might have been 75 percent uranium. So you would take the gross amounts, say 100 pounds and 75 percent of it was uranium and so 75 pounds was uranium. That's how they, how they determined that.

10:21:07

Q:

And how pure was the product that came out?

A:

Pure? Very, very high purity, I would say, well when you got into, when you got into the fuel elements they were 100 percent pure to my knowledge. You know I think, well I think they were. Because they had taken some of the, some of the steps did get rid of the impurities. I just don't remember. But it's my recollection that they were 100 percent pure uranium.

10:21:55

Q:

Now you got to be assistant controller (comment – yeah through luck) later on, through luck, can you tell us what that job was all about?

A:

Well, that job uh was pretty much kind of keeping the other departments, like the payroll department and the accounts payable, and the general accounting department and the auditing and so forth, the various departments, trying to keep them pretty much in line. You know, not by, by in line I don't mean cracking a whip or anything but just seeing that they're doing their job.

10:22:40

A:

If they had questions, they would come to me for resolution. And if I couldn't resolve them then I would go to the Controller. But we tried not to get the Controller too involved because he had other things that he was you know concerned with. But primarily that's what it was you know more or less keeping things moving and seeing that things were submitted on time and when they were due what have you. But uh, that was a real interesting job. Very interesting, I enjoyed it.

10:23:22

Q:

Now since you sort of held the keys to a lot of secrets at Fernald, I guess you could say, how did you communicate with your friends and family about your job?

A:

You know that wasn't difficult at all. You know certain things you couldn't say so I didn't say them and they didn't ask about them. There were some things that I would you know tell them about some of the exciting things that happened. But I would never get into the detail of what was classified and what wasn't classified. I just never had that, that, that I don't think with the exception of maybe my wife, I don't think the rest of my family really cared. Seriously.

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10:24:14

Q:

Now what were some of the exciting things that happened at Fernald?

A:

Oh my God. There was a lot of exciting things. Probably the most memorable was the fact when the union first negotiated their contract we had to, we had to calculate the back pay that was owed to them. And this took the entire accounting division to calculate this. Then it had to be after it was calculated, someone had to check it to make sure that the calculations were correct.

10:24:50

A:

Well we worked and worked a lot of overtime on that. And at the end we had a, what we called a back pay party. Celebrate. That was uh, we had some good times like some of the dances and we had, I remember we had a magician at one of the dances and he got another guy from accounting and myself to get involved in his act which he cut off our ties you know.

10:25:34

A:

But he gave us ties that were similar to. But everybody was saying, you know he pretended like he hypnotized us and all that stuff. We went along with it. We were pretty convincing. A lot of people thought it worked (laughter).

10:25:54

Q:

Now you were on the board? The what NEAA board? To do some of the extracurricular activities, can you tell us a little bit about some the extracurricular activities that happened at Fernald?

A:

Well, uh I guess primarily we had for the NEAA officers, one of the things we always had was a appreciation dinner for them. That was always exciting because a good time was had by all. But no there was the dances and the fishing derbies and the skeet club and the oh uh softball. We had softball teams out there. The accounting division had one.

10:26:47

A:

Uh, I remember I got ejected from the game one time and got thrown off of the project. They told me to leave the project and if I didn't leave he was going to forfeit the game to the team we were playing. And I told him, I said well you know what you ought to do with that uniform you got on, I said you

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ought to buy another one and put them both in a bag and burn it. Leave. I get in the car and go so that was one of the more memorable moments (laughter).

10:27:20

Q:

Did you play softball right on the property there?

A:

Yeah, we had two ball diamonds. There was one on the south part of I guess there's some sort of water something, south of the parking lot, isn't there, this was being built I think (comment – the water treatment plant?) No it was like a catch basin or something?

10:27:47

Q:

Oh yeah, the stormwater retention basin.

A:

Yeah, that. Well just a little south of that there was a ball field. And then on the north part where all the trees are planted there was a ball field up there. So yeah, we played, we played ball on there. And the NEAA each individual who was a member of the NEAA paid \$1.00 a year. The you know DOE would contribute so much per person for recreational purposes. I think they still probably do that don't they?

10:28:22

Q:

Yes, yes. Now it's called FEAA.

A:

FEAA. And then with that they'd have a company picnic. And then we, you know they had tickets that they gave out where you had free beer and free ice cream and free soft drinks you know that stuff. We didn't do it to the extent that you people are doing it now. I mean you people are really you know do some nice stuff. And uh.

10:28:58

Q:

We're going to take a little break here 'cause I just got my.

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11:01:05

Q:

If you could tell us a little bit about the production of uranium penetrators when that all came about, how did that come to Fernald and what happened with that?

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A:

Well I'm not just quite sure how it came to Fernald. But I don't know whether uh the Navy or the Air Force or the Army went to DOE and then DOE issued a I forget what they call it, production order. Yeah, that's what it is a production order. I forgot all about that. But anyway a production order which indicated produce so many of such and such at, and then the dimensions and so forth.

11:01:55

A:

So I think the various branches like the Army, Navy, Air Force went to DOE and then DOE issued a production order to us to produce those penetrators. And that was highly classified at the beginning and in fact I think even some of the machining work was done behind a big curtain. But we produced my understanding a very quality product.

11:02:29

A:

I think, I think, that's one thing I got to say about NLO, I really do believe and I say this with all sincerity, that they were very cost conscious and quality conscious minded. You know they were, that was foremost. And meeting production schedules, they were, and not at any risk factor either. I mean they didn't take shortcuts to my knowledge.

11:03:05

A:

They just, they just were interested in producing a good product. Which they did. So you know that's all I can say about that. But primarily the use of production orders is how we got a lot of these peculiar type, these peculiar type production activities.

11:03:28

Q:

And they also did armor at one point?

A:

Yes, that was uh, I guess, I think the program is declassified. It's the, they were making armor for the one of the new tanks that they were building. And this was a highly classified area, in fact those who worked on it had to get an additional clearance. And I, when I got into it I had to get another clearance which wasn't a top clearance but a clearance over and above the Q clearance that I had.

11:04:11

A:

And uh that was pretty extensive clearance I think. They, I don't think, it went into a lot of detail the first one did because you know. But then they were reviewing your clearance every so often. And towards the end they really got into some tough reviews. I mean they would ask people how much you drank, are you heavily in debt and so forth and you know were they aware of.

11:04:53

A:

Like when I came up for renewal you know does he drink, does he have a large amount of debt and so forth. They didn't know that I liked Manhattans (laughter). But that's why they put that in the book.

11:05:18

Q:

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That's great. Oh my gosh. There's a note here that says something about a security officer, who told you something about if somebody asks you what you made out there.

A:

Oh yeah. That was our first security division director, a fellow by the name of Clyde Bingham. And when he gave us a his initial orientation he said if anybody asks you what you make out at Fernald just tell them \$2.50 an hour. That was, that was standard everybody got that orientation.

11:05:57

Q:

Now we were talking earlier about safety and how do you feel, how safe do you feel the plant was for the workers? Especially under NLO.

A:

Uh, I, I believe that it was uh well let's see, I would say it was very safe for the most part. Now, there were some, there were some incidents that happened in the first, in the early years. I think there was two, well one death was in the, was it two, in the Thorium Plant. Where they, they were using calcium, calcium as a infinite for moisture, well they some how or another it ignited and it I think killed two persons because they were burned pretty bad.

11:07:06

A:

I would say overall other than that, you know which was a freakish accident, maybe the individual who was mopping around the area didn't realize, I don't know the particulars on it. I'd say overall they were conscientious about safety.

11:07:34

Q:

What was the safety culture like? Like how did they get the word out on things you should do, was there training?

A:

They had safety meetings and when my daughter became head of nuclear safety, they had training sessions where the employees were taught how to read you know the nuclear materials uh tags and how to space the material and so forth. Uh, I'd have to say you know even in accounting we had safety meetings. And I'll never forget we had a guest one time, and the guest Indiana State trooper that had brought in marijuana.

11:08:20

A:

And he burnt marijuana. Well I had never been exposed to it. That stuff is, is just obnoxious. I couldn't stand, it took me I think three Manhattans to get rid of that odor. Seriously, it just stuck in my nose and I didn't like that one.

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11:08:48

Q:

That's great. Oh gosh. Um, in the mid '80's of course that's when a lot of stuff started coming down um and a lot of media attention about dust collector releases and those types of things and it was the beginning of a big mess. Can you tell us how first of all how did you react to a lot of the media coverage of that event?

11:09:10

A:

Well my, I can remember when we first, we first heard about that there was a release. And the next day at the lunch table one of the accountants, you know I used to eat with there'd be four or five of us that ate together every day. He said this is going to blow over. I said no, I don't think so. I said I don't think this is going to blow over at all.

11:09:40

A:

Uh, I think that it was well you know DOE got involved then they had hearings with the residents, just things just started billowing up. And uh well uh just figured it was going to be a serious thing. But I don't think it was as serious as, as it probably was made out to be. But then again too, I'm not a, a chemical engineer or a physicist or a nuclear engineer and you know I'm just speaking, I'm just voicing my opinion.

11:10:34

A:

Because like they say uranium is very dense and when it goes up it can't travel because the wind it's just too heavy for the wind to carry. So a lot of it will just fall down and close by inside the, inside the, inside the plant area. Uh, you know Knollman had a dairy there and his, we used to lease, he used to lease from us the land around the plant.

11:11:14

A:

Now those cows, that was dairy farm. And see the question that comes to my mind is we used to have those cows checked twice a year for uranium content and nothing showed up. And so consequently you know the grass that they were grazing on, uh was close proximity to the plant, closer than say the neighbors. So I can't, that question still hangs in my mind you know how could it be that uranium traveled over these long distance when it didn't appear to show up in the cow's milk that grazed right on the plant's grounds.

11:12:00

A:

You know that's the question I have. I just don't understand that. You know I, I don't know if he still lets them graze there, does he? Do you still see a bunch of cows out there?

11:12:13

Q:

They're pretty close. They're not exactly on that same south, near the south access road anymore 'cause they're digging that ground up now (comment – oh) for the OSDF but they're still real close to the plant. We interviewed Knollman. (comment – did ya) He told us the same thing. He told us the same thing you did.

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11:12:30

A:

Yeah, they were tested. I mean the Bureau of the Mines I believe ran the initial test on the milk. Uh, it was sent out and you know that's why I can't you know I have a hard time, I have a hard time about this high rate of cancer that they're now coming up with. I just, I just you know can't just don't sit right with me you know. It may be true but I have questions. Have a lot of questions there.

11:13:09

Q:

Now you were heavily involved with the litigation for the class action suits, can you tell us about that?

A:

Well, uh as you know class action suit for brought about for the residents by Stan Chesley his firm, his law firm. And originally we had the law firm of I think it was Frost and Jacobs that took the initial start of that. And then it was Frost and Jacobs assisted the DOE attorneys and there was one from Los Alamos, I forget what the heck his name was, and then there was one I think from Washington that came in.

11:14:08

A:

But they were doing the bulk and they would direct us, the NLO people who were in the post-operations office, to prepare the contracts, subcontracts for consultants that they needed. So we did that, we did all of that work for them. And we would get the consultants then they, as the consultants their bill, we'd have these DOE attorneys review it and sign off you know before we paid it.

11:14:41

A:

But uh, the class action, that was a class action suit and they started off with people that were in the 2-mile radius of the plant. Then it went to 3-mile and 4-mile and up to a 5-mile. And I think the people that were in the 2-mile radius got, I think they got \$300 a piece and then or then it went down 'til I think, I think the people at 5-mile might have gotten \$200 at the least or something like that.

11:15:16

A:

I don't remember specifically. That was on the resident suit. On the employee suit, uh once again Stan Chesley's firm filed a class action suit and for the employees. And at that particular time we were a consultant, you know I was a consultant therefore we were considered to be excluded from the settlement. They fought very hard to exclude us but when it came to settling one of the stipulations was that we had to be included since we worked there.

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11:16:01

A:

And so we were included in that settlement and I don't think he particularly liked it but that's tough (laughter).

11:16:16

Q:

Now you had to testify and was that in Washington?

A:

We had to testify to John Dingle subcommittee in Washington. Uh, on the cost for the attorneys that were billing, see when we billed DOE for reimbursement, all these things were itemized in a voucher and it would show the name of the individual consultant and how much he received that much. And how much he received to date, you know, from the beginning of his time that he spent with us.

11:17:01

A:

And uh, they questioned a lot of the cost that the attorneys had and then what they were really aggravated about was the fact that we were collecting a fee for doing the work. And the fee was you know was nominal. But he felt that since we were being sued and DOE according to the terms of their contract with NLO they had to reimburse us for all the money.

11:17:40

A:

They had to support us 'cause that was included in there, the identification clause of the contract. Uh, he felt that you know we shouldn't get a fee. But you know DOE says we're going to have to discontinue the fees. We said well, you know, you got to do what you got to do. And they discontinued but that was a direct result of Congressman Dingle's efforts.

11:18:12

A:

They, we had to at that hearing we had to submit to them a copy of the last voucher we submitted showing all the names and everything. Well, that's when Paul Barton of the Enquirer got a hold of it and of course he questioned everything and that's when I told him I said well you wouldn't hire a bunch of plumbers to do. The guys who ran the facility, they knew, they knew what, I mean it wasn't that they were in on it and trying to cover things up or anything like that.

11:18:52

A:

I mean, they were just the people that knew the process. Knew what to look for and where to look for. So you know I think it was a legitimate uh, use of their knowledge. You know but the fact that they were employees, prior employees of NLO then they looked suspicious. But who could you get? You couldn't go out and hire a Chemical Engineer and say okay now where do we get this document from.

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11:19:31

A:

He wouldn't know where to, he wouldn't know which way to turn right or left or where to go to. He wouldn't know and that wouldn't be his fault. I mean he's qualified, well-qualified individual but it's not going, it's not going to give him the things that people that had worked with it know where things were. A Chemical Engineer would just not know where to go. And you know it's not, I'm not passing any disparaging light on him, it's just that way.

11:20:10

Q:

Now if NLO had gone to trial with the case, could they have won?

A:

I really believe they could have with the residents. The employees there might have been a horse with another color although we thought we had pretty good stuff there. But the residents, I really do believe we could have won.

11:20:36

Q:

And what kind of evidence would have been presented on NLO side?

A:

Evidence that there was you know safety, uh safety procedures and the fact that we felt the material didn't travel outside the plant boundaries. Uh the minuation and property values we had like I said had one of the top leading real estate consultants uh to have his crew check the property values of the homes around the Fernald area and there was no evidence that they had decreased in value. So with these facts we just felt like we had a pretty strong case.

11:21:28

Q:

Great, how do you feel about the fact that they did settle?

A:

Well I was a little disappointed. I would have like to seen it go to trial 'cause I really do think we could have. And it might have absolved NLO's name from that standpoint you know.

11:21:50

Q:

And how do you think the future Fernald from that point on would have changed?

A:

I think, I think that they would have gone on and I think they eventually would have cleaned it up. Because there was just a lot of stuff that needed to be cleaned. I mean we had 5, 5 pits out there that had a bunch of junk in it. The toxicity of those, of material in those pits I have no idea how it was but I know they were tested and so forth. But I think they might have gone on for production for a few more years.

11:22:45

A:

But I think the damage maybe it's a good thing that they settled you know. Maybe it is. Now that puts

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me on the fence, I just got done saying I think we could have beat them now I'm saying maybe it's a good thing that they settled. I don't mean to be controversial but you know who knows. Like I told you earlier and I'll reiterate it; I felt that when I left there the 36 years I put in out there, if I had 36 more years to put in I would put them in.

11:23:22

A:

You know if I was young enough to put in an additional 36 years. That's number one. Number two; **if I thought that place was harmful to individuals to work at I would never of told my daughter to apply for a job out there.** And you know my daughter did have a 2-pound 10-ounce baby girl, which was not attributed to working there but she worked there when she was carrying her. And the girl right now is terrific. I mean, excellent, in excellent shape, right Maggie?

11:24:18

Q:

That's great. Oh wow. Um, how do you feel that Fernald contributed to America's mission in the Cold War?

A:

Well number one I think they contributed to the standpoint that they, there was a nuclear stockpile you know that the Russians knew we had and I kind of think that from that standpoint that was a deterrent. Uh, I, I think they contributed in these other programs. In the penetrators and the tank armament and I think they contributed significantly in those areas.

11:25:06

A:

But I really do believe that the United States pretty much had to go up against the Russians. The Russians had a big stockpile too you know. This was I guess one of the requisites of the Cold War.

11:26:25

Q:

And what was the typical American's mindset during the Cold War?

A:

I think, I don't think, from my understanding I would say that I don't think the average American really gives a rat's patootie about, about it. I think, the only thing I can remember is the Cuban Missile Crisis. When Russian sent over those missiles to Cuban. Then people got panicky.

11:25:57

A:

That, that, that really scared the tar in some of the schools were telling the children about it and the children were getting all bent out of shape. That Cuban Missile Crisis I think put the fear to a lot of people. And then Sputnik did too. I think that, well those specific incidents, they seem to you know

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react but other than that I didn't think there was much reaction towards the Cold War. Now that's just my opinion you know.

11:26:40

Q:

We're going to back up just a little bit because I want you to tell me about the first computers on site.

A:

First computers on site. Well, we had a IBM, I don't remember the number, that was processing a lot of the let's see, what did that process? I guess it processed some of the payroll data and accounting data. Then we got this Honeywell 200 and that was um like I said it was probably state of the art at that time but it was a big unit.

11:27:33

A:

Then when we, we kept getting older and older and older we used to sweat getting the payroll out on that thing. There was a lot of times we had to, we kept thinking about what are we going to do for backup now? How are we going to get the backup, payroll out and thank God we didn't, we managed to get every payroll out. Because if we would have missed a payroll with the hourly people there would have been "Katie, bar the door," part the door you know. But uh, we managed to make it thank God.

11:28:09

Q:

And you had mentioned that that computer was one of how many?

A:

Well there was I think three of them in world at the time. You know of course there was more probably earlier but I guess everybody got rid of them or junked them but there was one in England and one that was excessed and one that we had. And so consequently spare parts were not easy to come by so you had to sweat that out.

11:28:38

A:

I remember there was one time that we had to get a part and they had to get it from California. Oh and we needed 'cause, we had to have it to get the payroll out and we sweat bullets on that one. They finally you know they Fed Exed the part in and we got it in there and everything turned out all right. That was a lot of sweating on those payroll days and that was once a week.

11:29:15

Q:

Great, we're going to take another little break here to switch tapes.

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TAPE FLHP0105

12:01:06

Q:

And uh, how do you feel about the work that's going on at Fernald now?

A:

I think it's doing a pretty good job. Seems like it's getting a lot of the stuff cleaned up. The buildings are being demolished. I have not been out there and not taken advantage of the tour that was offered to some of the retirees that I really should do that next time it's offered. I understand you can come out any time. I don't know if that's true or false, is that right?

12:01:38

A:

I would like to see it and get, and have situation, some of the changes explained. It'd be interesting. But it seems like I go out there, the one thing it makes me feel like I never worked there before. I'm a stranger. And because you know nobody knows me and I don't have the people that I know there's all new faces. And you just get a feeling that you know you're not part of it.

12:02:14

A:

And 36 years you're a part of it then all the sudden you're not a part of it. That's a little bit that's how it impacts me, you know, but it's not too bad. Nothing to worry about.

12:02:35

Q:

That would be weird though. (comment – no, it is) Now that I think about it because.

A:

No seriously I mean even while Westinghouse was still there, there was a couple of occasions I went out there. One time I went out there for a physical and oh, it was just like I never had a physical out there and I've had 34 of them from NLO you know. Approximately 34 I would say 'cause they try to give you a physical every year. So, it's different, it was different yeah.

12:03:11

Q:

Speaking of physicals, tell us a little bit about your medical monitoring. How that whole program came about and how.

A:

Well medical monitoring was part of the settlement of the class action suit that was filed on behalf of the employees. And uh, each year we get a letter that we're up for our annual exam and it's conducted at Drake Hospital down on, I guess it's Galbraith Road.

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12:03:48

A:

And I think the first, the first one, they were I guess feeling their way and it took about 3 hours. And that was just a little bit too long you know. But the second one and the third one were a little bit shorter in time. And on the second one, in my particular case, they did, discovered some blood in my urine and suggested I see a urologist which I did.

12:04:15

A:

And he found a bladder tumor which was removed. And so you know from that standpoint I think, think it's pretty good. I've been very fortunate. I have an awfully attractive female doctor that examines me every year. I mean she is a looker, really nice and that makes a physical not too half-bad you know. I mean you can take all kind of probing (laughter).

12:04:53

Q:

That's great. Oh gosh. Um, they're going to be tearing down most the buildings you know within the next couple of years and there's been a lot of discussion about future land use. What would you personally like to see on the land that Fernald sits on right now?

12:05:22

A:

Possibly a museum with the artifacts of Fernald so that the people remember that there was a facility there that did have something to do with the United States combatting our enemies so to speak. And the rest maybe convert it to a picnic area you know. Something of that sort. I understand you got, you got the American Indian burial ground I guess that needs to be preserved. Fine, you know make it, make it a little museum for the Indians. I don't guess there's any Italians out there are there? You could have another museum for them.

12:06:19

Q:

Oh, that's great. Um, something that they've been talking a lot about since the 50th anniversary of the site is fast approaching they're calling that let's see, 1951 is when they broke ground so they want to call 2001 the 50th anniversary. They sort have been talking about this a little bit and something that they would refer to someone like you who worked there 30 some years is a Cold War warrior.

12:06:40

A:

Cold War warrior.

Q:

How do you like being called a Cold War warrior?

A:

Hey, that's not bad you know. I have no objection. Some other names that I've been called I have objections to but Cold War warrior is not one of them.

12:07:03

Q:

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Oh gosh. Well I got to the end of my questions, is there anything you wanted to add, anything we didn't cover that you wanted to cover?

A:

No, I you know it's kind of, it's kind of difficult to try to get everything in that possibly happened to you and get that out. Uh, 'cause I'm sure there's certain things that you probably would be real interested but I can't think of them you know. And senility is a bad thing. I do my crossword puzzles every day though. Two of them in the Enquirer and that keeps me, keeps me pretty sharp. Or tries, I think it does. Maybe others don't.

12:07:53

Q:

Well whenever you have to think of words that's always keeps things going. Well what we're going to do right now is something called natural sound. And we're just going to get room tone so if we can just have quiet on the set for just a few minutes here. This is nat sound.